

Appl. No. 10/790,374
Amdt. dated November 8, 2006
Reply to Office Action mailed August 7, 2006

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A method for harvesting an artery comprising:

providing [a] an instrument having a long slender rod with and a handle on one end, the handle and the rod being substantially coaxial, a sideways hook on the other end, and a segment located therebetween at a distal end of the rod, the segment including a sideways hook at its distal end, the segment offsetting the hook from a longitudinal axis defined by the rod and the handle;

manipulating the rod so as to slide the sideways hook around the artery; and
pushing and/or pulling the rod to slide the hook along the artery until the artery is separated from the surrounding tissue.

Claim 2 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing the long slender rod with a second sideways hook on the distal end of the rod, said second sideways hook attached to the rod near the first sideways hook and extending from the rod in an opposing direction from the first sideways hook.

Claim 3 (Currently amended): A method for separating or dissecting an artery from surrounding tissue, said method comprising:

providing [a] an instrument having a long slender rod with and a handle on one end, the handle and the rod being substantially coaxial, a sideways hook on the other end, and a segment

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located therebetween at a distal end of the rod, the segment including a sideways hook at its distal end, the segment offsetting the hook from a longitudinal axis defined by the rod and the handle;

manipulating the rod so as to slide the sideways hook around the artery and engage the artery with the hook; and

separating the artery by pushing and/or pulling the rod to slide the hook along the artery until the artery is separated from the surrounding tissue.

Claim 4 (Previously presented): The method of claim 3, further comprising:

providing the long slender rod with a second sideways hook on the distal end of the rod, said second sideways hook attached to the rod near the first sideways hook and extending from the rod in an opposing direction from the first sideways hook.

Claim 5 (Currently amended): A method for harvesting an artery from the body, said method comprising:

making a small incision in the skin in the vicinity of the artery;

providing [a] an instrument having a long slender rod with and a handle on one end, the handle and the rod being substantially coaxial, a sideways hook on the other end, and a segment located therebetween at a distal end of the rod, the segment including a sideways hook at its distal end, the segment offsetting the hook from a longitudinal axis defined by the rod and the handle;

inserting the hooked end of the rod into the small incision until the hooked end is in the

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vicinity of the artery;

manipulating the rod to slide the hook around the artery; and

pushing and or pulling the rod to slide the hook along the artery to separate the artery from surrounding tissue.

Claim 6 (Previously presented): The method of claim 5, further comprising:

providing the long slender rod with a second sideways hook on the distal end of the rod, said second sideways hook attached to the rod near the first sideways hook and extending from the rod in an opposing direction from the first sideways hook.

Claim 7 (Currently amended): A method of harvesting an artery, said method comprising:

making an incision through the skin in the vicinity of the artery;

inserting a tunneling device into the incision to create a tunnel along the artery;

insufflating the tunnel by placing a seal at the incision, and injecting gas or liquid through the seal;

providing a long slender rod with a handle end, a hooked end, and a segment located therebetween, the segment offsetting the hook from a longitudinal axis defined by the rod, said hooked end having a sideways extending hook near its distal tip, said handle end being substantially coaxial with the rod;

inserting the rod, hooked end first, into the tunnel through the seal; manipulating the rod to slide the hook around the artery; and

pushing and/or pulling the rod to slide the hook along the artery to separate the artery

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from its surrounding tissue.

Claim 8 (Previously presented): The method of claim 7, further comprising:

providing the long slender rod with a second sideways hook on the distal end of the rod, said second sideways hook attached to the rod near the first sideways hook and extending from the rod in an opposing direction from the first sideways hook.

Claim 9 (Previously presented): The method of claim 8 further comprising the steps of:

providing the long slender rod with a long tube surrounding the rod, said tube extending over a longitudinal segment of the rod, said tube mated to the rod in an airtight manner to inhibit air or fluid from flowing between the tube and the rod;
inserting the long slender rod, with the long tube surrounding the rod, into the tunnel through the seal.

Claim 10 (Previously presented): The method of claim 9 further comprising the steps of providing the long slender rod with a means for sealing any space between the rod and the seal to inhibit the flow of gas or fluid between the rod and the seal.

Claim 11 (canceled).

Claim 12 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the sideways hook defines an arc of about 180° to about 270°.

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Claim 13 (Previously presented): The method of claim 3, wherein the sideways hook defines an arc of about 180° to about 270°.

Claim 14 (Previously presented): The method of claim 5, wherein the sideways hook defines an arc of about 180° to about 270°.

Claim 15 (Previously presented): The method of claim 7, wherein the sideways hook defines an arc of about 180° to about 270°.